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THE NEWSPAPER is an institution developed by modern civilization to present the news of the day, to foster commerce and industry, to inform and lead public opinion, and to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has ever been able to provide.

—THE TRIBUNE CREDO

CLASP OF BLOODY HANDS

Deals with the Communists are already a notorious hallmark of the Kennedy administration, so there is no occasion for surprise that another one has been concluded. At the behest of Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy, Gov. Rockefeller of New York has commuted the prison sentence of a pro-Castro killer and the gunman has been sent back to Cuba.

Three other Cubans, one an attache of the Cuban mission to the United Nations, who were held on federal charges of conspiracy to commit sabotage by blowing up defense installations, were turned loose in New York by the government and put aboard a plane for Cuba with the gunman.

This was the payoff for the release of Castro of 21 American prisoners held in Cuban jails, some of them for more than two years. Rockefeller confirmed that the attorney general had sought his cooperation in making the swap.

This is the administration's fourth deal with the Communists that we can recall. Two have been with communist Cuba and two with Soviet Russia. None of them was perfumed and we got the short end on all of them.

Last year Castro exacted a ransom of 53 million dollars in food and medicine for the release of 1,113 Cuban refugee invaders captured in the Bay of Pigs fiasco of April, 1961. The administration shook down industries, suppliers, banks, railroads, air lines, trucking companies, and steamship lines to obtain the blackmail and transport it.

As part of the same deal, an additional \$2,900,000 was collected to pay off Castro for the preliminary release of 60 sick and wounded prisoners. It was disclosed that Atty. Gen. Kennedy was assisted by Gen. Lucius Clay in collecting the money, and that the services of Cardinal Cushing of Boston were enlisted in raising one million

The first of the Kennedy deals, with the administration never chose to describe it as such—involved a trade of two agents indicted in federal court at Chicago as soviet spies in return for Russia's release of two surviving members of the crew of an American RB-47 plane shot down over the Barents sea in July, 1960.

The Russian espionage agents, Igor Y. Melekh, a former soviet employe of the United Nations, and Willie Hirsch, a German-born medical illustrator from New York City, were accused of gathering maps and aerial photographs to assist in any soviet attack on Chicago. The released American airmen, Captains Olmstead and McKone, confirmed what American radar had already established—that they had never been over Russian territory.

In February, 1962, Francis Gary Powers, whose U-2 photographic plane was brought down inside Russia on May 1, 1960, was exchanged for Col. Rudolf Abel, soviet master spy, who had been sentenced to 30 years in prison for espionage. He obtained United States defense information over a long period and was involved in the theft of atomic secrets.

Yet the latest Cuban deal is probably more noisome than any of these. The attorney general was willing to spring Francisco Molina del Rio from the penitentiary, where he was serving a sentence of from 20 years to life for killing a 9-year-old girl, and to turn loose three Castro agents caught with dynamite in their possession. The child was killed in a shooting brawl between Molina and some pro-Castro Cubans and a group of anti-communist Cubans in a New York restaurant.

Once our government gets into deals with killers, the blood wipes off on its own hands. When it condones murder, as in the case of Molina, it condones the crimes of Castro, who has ordered hundreds of executions, and the crime of Khrushchev, who liquidated uncounted numbers of victims in soviet purges. The moral distinctions which elevate us above communism are lost in such secret deals.

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